intake region of the apertured disk produced by the thickness reduction, such that the at least one spray-discharge opening is covered.

Neither Maier et al., nor Reiter discloses, or even suggests, the feature of reducing a thickness in one region of a flat, metallic sheet by one of impressing and embossing. As is apparent from Figs. 2 and 3 of Maier et al., the perforated disk (70), which the Office Action considers to constitute a flat, metallic sheet, has a constant thickness and no region of reduced thickness. In addition, contrary to the contentions appearing in the last paragraph of page 2 of the Office Action, the injection port disk (34) of Reiter does not have a region of reduced thickness produced by impressing the injection port disk (34) into the valve housing (1) of a fuel injection valve. As is apparent from Fig. 1 of Reiter, the material thickness of the bottom part (35) of the injection port disk (34) is not shown to be less than the material thickness of the retaining rim (40) of injection port disk (34). In addition, Reiter nowhere mentions that a material thickness of the injection port disk (34) is less in the bottom part (35) than in the retaining rim (40). Furthermore, the injection port disk (34) is not impressed into the valve housing (1). In column 2, lines 54 to 57, Reiter merely indicates that the retaining rim (40) of injection port disk (34) extends axially away from a valve seat body (16) and is bent conically outward as far as its end (41).

Furthermore, neither Maier et al., nor Reiter discloses, or even suggests, the feature of securing an apertured disk on a valve-seat member of a fuel injector in such a way that a lower end face of the valve-seat member overlaps an intake region of the apertured disk produced by a thickness reduction, such that at least one spray-discharge opening is covered. As is apparent from Fig. 2 and column 4, lines 38 to 40 and 47 to 49 of Maier et al., the orifice (73) in the perforated disk (70) shown in Fig. 2 has a smaller diameter than the outlet orifice (32) of the valve seat element (26), and the longitudinal axes of outlet orifice (32) and orifice (73) coincide. Thus, in the embodiment shown in Fig. 2 of Maier et al., the end face of the spray discharge region (66) of the valve seat element (26) does not overlap any intake region (i.e., orifice (73)) of perforated disk (70), such that orifice (73) is covered. In addition, as is apparent from Fig. 3 and column 4, lines 60 to 62, upstream section (75) of the stepped orifice (73) in the perforated disk (70) shown in Fig. 3 has a smaller diameter than outlet orifice (32) and is coaxial with outlet orifice (32). Thus, in the embodiment shown in Fig. 3 of

Maier et al., the end face of the spray discharge region (66) of the valve seat element (26) does not overlap any intake region (i.e., upstream section (75) of stepped orifice (73)) of perforated disk (70), such that orifice (73) is covered. Although the downstream section (76) of the stepped orifice (73) may have a greater diameter than outlet orifice (32) (which, however, is not conceded), the downstream section (76) is situated at an outlet of stepped orifice (73) and can therefore not be considered to be an intake region of perforated disk (70).

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of Maier et al. and Reiter does not render claim 8 unpatentable for these additional reasons.

As regards claims 9 to 14, which ultimately depend from claim 8 and therefore include all of the features of claim 8, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of Maier et al. and Reiter does not render unpatentable these dependent claims for the additional reasons set forth above.

In view of all of the foregoing, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Prompt reconsideration and allowance of the present application are therefore earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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